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DUAL ENROLLMENT ISSUES
May 3, 2005

When I learned of the opportunity to share with you some thoughts on the Dual Enrollment Program I solicited input from my colleagues from around the state. What you will hear is a summary of those comments.

Purpose:

The Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act was enacted to provide those students capable of taking college-level classes the opportunity to get an early start on college. By allowing students to concurrently enroll in college classes while finishing their high school requirements afforded them the opportunity to obtain valuable experience and college credit for little or no cost.

Eligibility:

For a student to be eligible, they must be either a high school junior or senior, be enrolled in at least one high school course and have taken all sections of the MEAP High School Proficiency Test. If students had not passed all portions of the MEAP, then they would only be eligible to take courses in which they have achieved state endorsement in computer science or foreign language, and those courses are not offered by the school district.

Generally courses that qualify for dual enrollment must be:

- a course not offered by the school district
- a course that is offered but is not available to the student due to scheduling conflicts
- a course that is not in physical education, theology, divinity or religious education
- a course that the college normally applies toward graduation requirements

Problems:
- Many school districts do not support the program because it reduces the head count at their high school. This causes problems because they do not promote it to those students who could best benefit from college level courses.

- Many high schools will not pay for general education courses because the high school offers them. These general education courses are college-level courses and are transferable as college credit.
- We have experienced difficulty with four-year schools in accepting these earned credits as transfer credits at their institution if the student is also using the course to satisfy high school requirements.
- Some schools have refused to accept these credits if the students are being taught at the high school instead of at the college. This is particularly true at colleges in rural areas where transportation is a problem.
- Some school districts are not properly screening students to determine their emotional readiness for college. Others are using the system to send "problem" students to the college campus so as not to deal with disciplinary issues.
- Some students are "forced" into the college experience by their parents for the wrong reasons. Many parents view this as a status symbol.
- Some high schools have been unwilling to pay for the dual enrollment classes up front because they want to see the student's grade and then reimburse the student. This is not the way the system was designed. Therefore, the colleges have to intervene regarding payment and this leads to some challenges in our relationship with the high schools.

Recommendations:

- High schools and colleges need more say in the appropriateness of each individual student.
- The State could address the funding issues raised by some school districts to increase cooperation and opportunities for students.
- Universities should be required to accept the credits earned through dual enrollment regardless of where the course is taught.
- The majority of dual enrolled students take courses in the Liberal Arts while ignoring many technical and career areas. We believe that many students could benefit from the broad range of courses offered in the career and technical fields.
- Have the state develop a marketing strategy that would be directed at parents so that we are not solely dependent on the local school districts to publicize the program.

In summary, the program works well in those areas where the local school districts embrace the concept. There are colleges that have as many as 300 – 400 high school students taking advantage of this opportunity while in other areas the program is not widely utilized.